A TREATISE OF CHARITE.

1. Ioan. 5.

Hæc est enim charitas dei, vt præcepta eius seruemus.

1534

1. 7. 118.

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Am wel minded to
ſtycke to my pro-
meſſe, of charite, by
cauſe you can not
miſlike my writing
how rudely ſo euer
I write, onles you diminiſhe your
owne charitie. For charitie taketh
all thinges in good worth, and con-
ſidereth more the good wyll of the
werkeman, then the beautie of the
werke. Here vpon I am bolded to
ſhewe my mynde in fewe wordes,
what is charitie, and how we may
kepe charitie. A ſayinge moche v-
ſed with euery man and woman,
but not ſo well perceyued, as it is
commonlye ſpoken. Spekers of
charitie be plentie, kepers of cha-
ritie be very ſcaſe, althoughe you
wolde make ſetche through out al
religious cloiſters. To be without

malice and hate is not inough, yet very fewe be founde so clere: nor it is not inough to loue in a slyght or a common, or in a meane wyse. If you kepe in you, Charitie, ye be spotles of al grudges, and therwith ye loue in the moste highest degree of louynge bothe god and man, god for hym selfe, and man for goddis sake.

But here nowe me thinketh, we be to sodeinly entred with a skyp to the myddes of this mater: let vs make som conuenient beginning, and therafter lette vs procede. For both you shall with the more ease gather the fruite of this lesson, and I shal the better se what is taught, if the sentences be layd in their due order.

And for as moche good sister, as this thinge that we here take in

hande to treate of, is all holy, all godly, all heuenly, farre paſſynge the relyques of ſayntes, farre paſſynge the halowed chalices: Lette vs, I praye you, beware of preſumptyon, to touche this mattier with foule fingers. It is our part to waſſhe oure handes cleane, I meane, as the matter is ſpiritual, ſo our ſpirite muſte be prepared in a due reuerence, accordynge to the highe dignitie of this vertue. the water that clenſeth our ſpirite and mynde, is mekenes. Herewithe I ſay we muſte prepare vs, both you to here, and I to ſpeke of holy charitie: bycauſe Chriſte ſaythe, that in charitie is conteyned al the law of god: And goddis lawe dothe chiefely enforce. ii. thynges, one to make vs, by threteninge of peynes, to flee from syn: an other, to cauſe

We ware of preſumtion.

Mekenes

Matt. 22.

vs, promisynge of ioyes to folowe vertue. It muste nedes then be true, that Charitie maketh men do bothe these thinges, to forsake synne, and to embrace vertue.

What charitie causeth.

This is to sey, by Charitie we refuse euyll, and take good, by charitie we flee doinge noughtly, and cleue to doynge well, by Charitie we escape dispraise, and deserue praise, by charitie we duly bothe feare and loue god, finally by charitie, we be ryd from the bondage of our ennemy the prynce of this worlde, and be franke in the libertie of goddis kyngdome.

¶ In this speakynge of charitie, there semith to be an other strēgth in the word, than comenly we vnderstande in our englysche tonge: and surely the trouthe is soo, that farre aboue our cōmen vnderstan-

dyng

dynge, this worde signifiethe the hole perfectyon of a christen man: It is a worde borowed with vs of the latyne called Charitas. If you nowe wyll considre, what is the fountayne lyke and soule of mans vertue, the spacinge and rote of all his good werkes: you shall see, that it is only the true loue of god. For who so euer hathe his mynde inwardly ameled, bakē, & throughfyred with the loue of god: he is the blessed man, that kepeth goddis worde, that fulfylleth al goddis lawe, that neuer wyllethe doinge euyl, and euer wylleth doing well, in the perfecte forme, fashon, shappe, and kynde of well doing.

Charite is the holle perfection of a christen man.

This loue of god, that causethe suche perfections in man, is called Charytie. But remembre, it mays not be taken in the weake

what is charitie.

common manet: for all they haue not this charite, that say they loue God: Nor all they loue not God, that so sey. We be not as our seyinge soundethe, but as god seeth our thoughtes, so we be. None of vs loueth god, that enforcethe to wyll any thinge beſydes goddys wyll. He loueth not god perfetly, that thynkethe any thynge beſyde god: he loueth not god perfitely, that dothe any thing without god. The perfecte loue of god can not ſtande with any care or ſtudy for this lyfe: the perfyte loue of god abydethe not the couplynge with any other loue: the perfect loue of god knoweth none affectiõ to kinred, it knoweth no difference betwene poze and riche, it knoweth not what meneth myne and thyne, it cannot diuyde a foo frome a frende.

frende. For he that truly and perfectly loueth god, muste loue god alone, nothynge beſyde god, nor with god: but loue al indyfferently in god and for god.

We that ſay, we loue god, when we ſcant ones in a daye remembre god, and yet neuer remembre we God in ſuche a maner, but that more often and more erneſtly we remembre other thynges, in ſayinge we loue god, & doynge thus, we can not proue true that we ſay. For the perfecte louer of god is ſo wedded to god, that i his thought nothynge abydeth, but the quycke remembrance of god. Our ſpirytes and ſenſes be occupied with ſo many other matters, that ſcante we haue leyſer to thynk on god, ſo farre we be from this charitie: the whiche I ſay, is a vertue of that

dignitie, power, and maiestie, that by it self, it conteyneth al the precepte of the patriarkes, al the lawes of the prophetes, all the doctrine of Christe, all the rules of the apostels, all the inuentions of the holy churche: ye more then all this, charyte hath a lybertye of power ouer bothe the olde and the newe testament. For the true louer of god, the whiche is the charitable person, is vnder no reule: but he is a lorde aboue all lawes, all inuentions, all preceptes, all commandementes, that god hath gyuen to man. For charitie hathe no bonde.

But alwey sister remembre, that charite is not perfect, oneles that it be burnynge. It is not a quenched loue, a colde loue a loue growinge in the tethe or lyppes, that

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is charite: but the hotte feruente burnynge hartes affecte towarde god, is the loue that is vnderstand in the name of charitie, the which (as is sayd) doth not only conteine all the doctrine of Christe, but also it is aboue al lawes, to rule rather then to be ruled.

The ende of all the course and walkinge of the sonne of god in this worlde, was to leue amonge men this Charitie. The marke, wherto our sautour in all his preachynge and teachynge loked, was to haue men indued with charyte. For our diuine maister sawe, that there neded no reherfall of sinnes, the whiche were to be eschewed, nor yet of vertues, that were to be folowed, if man could take charitie, that is by it selfe suffycyent for all, bothe to kepe menne from

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stumblyng in the wey, from wanderyng out of the wey, and finally, to conducte men to the blessed wayes ende. Here you se, that the compasse and circuite of charite is large and wyde, in as moche as it comprehendeth al that can be spoken, either ageynste vice, or with vertue.

You peraduenture thought, that charitie was nothinge els, but to kepe pacience, and not to be displesed nor angry. It is trouthe, this poynt is one parte of charitie: but it is not all. For what so euer the loue of god prouokethe vs to, or the feare of god dryuethe vs from, all in one summe is concluded to be vnderstande in charitie.

Wherupon I maye, if you kepe charitie, saye, that you be the very doughter of god, and moste dere sy-

ſyſter of Chriſte. But I feare me, youe haue moze ofte ſpoken the wozde charitie, then you haue ſtudyed to lerne, what thynge ſhulde be Charytie: and therby ye ſaye paraduenture of your ſelfe, moze then you doo. For I haue noted your mynde to be ſomwhat troubled with certayne fantaſies, the which could haue no place in you, if you were fylled with this charitie. For here a lyttel moze in fewe wozdes, what is the playne definition of this vertue, as I fynde it wzyten of a greatte holy man, and a common doctour.

Charitie (ſaythe he) is a good and a gracious effect of the ſoule, wherby mans harte hathe no fantaſie to eſteme, valour, oz ponder any thinge in this wyde wozlde, beſide oz befoze the care and ſtudy

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to knowe god. For who so euer is inclyned to loue these erthly thynges, it is not possible for hym euer to atteyne, so longe as he so dothe, to the assured constant & perfit vse of this charitie, bycause his mynd hath so many and soo dyuerse lettes, that hyndre and withdrawe hym from takynge the possessyon of this great treasure, wherin be touched the heapes of all vertues. And a lyttel nowe to speke of these impedimentes and lettes, it shall moche apperteyn to our purpose: for we shall the quyckelyer come to charitie, if we can knowe and escape all the blockes, that lye in our waye to lette vs: not onely to lette vs to come to charitie, but to dryue and chase awaye frome vs this vertue, that neither we canne come to it, nor that to vs.

The

The perfyte loue of god hath in it a meruaylous quietnes & reste, it is neuer moued, styred, nor caried away by no storme of worldly troubles, but syttethe faste and sure in a cõtinual calmnes, ayenst al wedders, al blastes, al stormes. No rocke is more stylle, then is the mynde of a charitable manne, whan the worlde tũbleth, tolleth, & tosseth it with the bomy waues of temptations, the whiche drowneth the myndes of all vs, that be weake or sicke in charitie. I wold therfore syster, that you diligently lerned, what be these blastes, that turmoylen our myndes out of the reste, the which charitie requireth.

The perfite loue of god.

You shall vnderstand, that there be certayn motiõs called passions, that sooze assaulte our soule, and bringeth our spirite to moche vn-

quy-

quietnes, as to be moued with anger is a great rollinge of the mind, to bzede enmie, to fede rancour, to nourisshe malice, to be mindeful of any iniure, to be studious of auēgynge, to be greued with yll speakynge, to fume at backe byting, to grudge at compleyntes, to frette with chydinge, to striue foz shame, foz sclander. These be the thinges, that suffre no mynde reste, any of these passions troublethe the mynde continually from one fantasy to an other: so that no quietnes can be had.

Agayne, to study foz promotion, to care foz mariage, to fyshe foz riches, to be gredie of honour, to be desirous of fauour, to couette preferremente, to gape foz prayses: these also be sharpe spurres, that chasen the mynde, and kepen the

mynde

mynde euer styrynge and boyde of quyetnes.

Like wise to ensu a delite of deintye and swete fedynge, to be taken with pleasure of the body, to be ouerthrowen with sorowe, to perche vp with gladnes, to holde vp the chyn to hyghe in prosperitie, to hold downe the heed to low in aduersite, to be in bondage vnder the fierse rules of sensual luste. Whose crueltie ouer man hath noo pytie, measure, nor ende. These and suche other be thynges, that so troublen & disquieten mans mind, that quiet charitie can not abyde there. For loke a lyttell vpon the vnmercyfull man, that can not forgyue, see howe he boyleth in his appetite to be auenged. Loke vpon the enuious stomake, howe he without rest freteth, in couetynge the syght

of his hurte, whom he spyteth. Looke vpon the glotton, howe beastely he purueyeth bealy chere. Loke vpon the lecherer, how busy he is in his vngracious thoughte. Looke vppon the couetous wretche, howe without reason he scrapeth and shrapeth for gaynes. Loke vpon the ambitious felowe, howe he besturrethe hym to gette worshyppe. These men throughe theyr corrupt fantasies be no lesse gredye to satisfye theyr desyres, than the hungry & the thurstye bodyes throughe naturall necessitye seke to be refreshed. Wherof we may se, that sleppynge and waking these mens myndes rolle without takynge reste. Suche wrastlynge phantasyes, suche inordynate appetites be called passions, the whiche moue and styre the soule contrarye

trary to his nature, eyther by loue withoute reason, or by hate without measure, when we wyllyngely consente to the wynde of these sensyble thynges.

The mother of all these passions is a parciall loue, that we beare to our selfe, that is to say, the loue of this carcas, and of this lyfe. To kylle in vs this mother to all mysches, our master Christe techeth vs to hate this lyfe, and to set our bodyes at nought: He saythe, it is the nexte waye to fynde lyfe, if we sette nothynge by the losse of this lyfe: he saythe, the carynge for our body impoyeth and bringeth with hit a mystruste of goddes prouidence, as thoughe god had better prouyded for the state of byrdes, than for man, whom he hath created after his own image. Now the

Partiall loue.

Mat. 16. Mar. 8. Luc. 9. Io. 12. Mat. 6. Luc. 12.

to gete this reste, that therby we maye gette charite, we muste caste awaye the loue of this lyfe: the which cauleth all the sayde truffelynge passions, by the whiche our soule standeth in peryll of deathe. For lerne you, that to the soule it is a sooze death, to be seperated frome god. And these passions be they, that onelye plucke the soule from god, and causethe the soule to forgette heuen in the busy occupations of this wozlde, the whiche wozlde swarmeth full of deed soules, that nyght and day trauelyn, and sweatte in the wozkes of darkenes, from whens they shall departe in to an other darknesse endles, neuer to se the face of god. And this is the conclusyon of the passionat soule, that lieth in the fetters of fylthye lustes without re-

D. a.

drawen nowe hyther nowe thyther in a continuall wauerynge of vayne fantasies. But on the other syde the quicke lyuynge soule, that quietly restethe in the loue of god, dryuethe frome hym by the power of grace, wherwith he is indued, all these vnquiete passions. If he stonde in feare to be moued with vncomely appetytes, he fasteth, he watcheth, he labozeth. The man (I saye) oz woman dothe this, in whome suche a blessed soule beareth rule.

Lyke wyse ayenste anger, wzath, and vayne glozye he settethe atte nought bothe honour and dyshonour: shame, sclaunder and wozshyppe in this wozlde be nothynge in his reputation. Ageynst remembraunce of displesures he prayeth foz his euyll wyllers. Suche a

maner charitie teacheth and courageth this blessed soule to be occupied in the meinteining and defendynge the myndes quietnes, a thynge aboue all thynges in this worlde to be kepte warely.

What charitie causeth.

The reste that aungels in heuen haue, is none other but this, not to be moued nor sturred with these passiõs, of louing, of hating, of being pleased, of being displesed, of trusting, of lustyng, of abhorryng, of coueting, of refusing, of reioising, of lamentynge, & of innumerable suche other, that scourgethe and whyppeth mans mynde by reason of the corrupte affaction and loue that he beareth in his ytchyng body, a loue mooste contrary to charitie: the whiche hathe as moche ease, as that hathe trouble. You shall here a lesson of our mayster

Chriſte,

Chriſte, the autor and preacher of charitie: He admyſſethe, counſayleth, and commaundeth me, if I be his diſciple, not to reſiſte ayenſt euyll, to offre my left cheke to him that hathe be blowed me on the righte, to leaue my gowne to hym that hath taken from me my cote, to walke two miles with hym that hath bered me, and compelled me to walke one myle. Mat. 5. Luc. 6.

The forme of this leſſon that Chriſte here gyueth, is to enſtructe and warne all chriſten men, to regarde nothynge of the body or of the worlde, aboue the reſt and quietneſſe of the mynde: but that we ſhulde ſuffre the loſſe of oure goodes, with the hurte, ye with the dethe of out bodyes rather thenne we ſhulde loſe any ſmalle portion of charitie, to be moued with any

passion of minde, wherby our loue towarde god, myght decay.

It is not possible, after Christis doctrine, to take in this worlde by any kynde of violence soo greatte damage or hurte in bodye or goodes, as is the leest droppe of trouble in the mynde, where no tyrant, nor the deuyll hym selfe hathe any dominion. For there onely rulethe our owne free wyll: soo that if we wyll disorder our mynde with any passion, we be to our selfe more violent and cruell, than the dyuelle can be. Wherfore my good syster, let vs beleue our mayster Christe, and to the deathe, lette vs neuer breake peace with god. For if we do, fare well all reste. We breake peace with god, when we tourne vs for any cause to the care of this lyfe.

If you fele your selfe inordynatly moued with dysplesante wordes, with angry countenaunces, with euyll reportes, with dyspreises, with rebukes, with fals sclander, with vntrue compleintes: beware syster, for surelye you be not in charitie with god. If you mumble vpon coniectours, if you fede vpon suspicions, if you gnawe vpon shrewde tales, if you delyte to gyue taunte for taunte: beware agayne good syster, for withoute doubte, god and you be tweyne. And if you beleue the sonne of god, mat 4
your selfe with your owne wylle, doo more then any fierce pryncc ouer you coulde do, all thoughe he brought you to extreme wretchednes, and at the laste to the deathe tourmented your body. It is without comparison worse to be besette

with these passions, thanne it is to suffre the panges of dethe. But at this poynte peraduenture you wyl say and aske me: whether we shuld forsake al the commodities of this worlde: whether we shulde make no force to gette suche thynges, as kepethe vp the welthe of oure body: whether we shulde vtterly refuse all thynges ordeyned for this lyfe: whether we shulde be cleane careles of good name? No no, sister not so. Holy scripture forbeadeth vs nothynge, that is for vse or profyte: as by Christes lawe it is not forbyd to eate, to drynke, to haue and gette, wherwith suche sustinaunce maye be meynteyned, to gette children, to haue money, to haue possessyons, to be in honour, to be regarded: but the worde of god suffrethe not glotto-

ny, and a delyte in the belye chere, noꝛ lechery, and an vnlaukull ple-
ſure in bodylye luſtes: noꝛ coue-
touſneſſe, noꝛ a gredye deſyre to be
ryche: not vayneglozy & a proude
deſire to be magnified. Lyke wyſe
the commaundemente of god foꝛ-
beadeth vs not the thynkynge of
theſe and of ſuche other thynges:
but it is playne contrarye to the
wylle of god, that we ſhulde with
any great intention, ſolicitude, oꝛ
carefulneſſe of mynde, proſecute
theſe bodyly neceſſyties. And in
the hauynge of the goodes, pro-
motions, and honours, we maye
not iudge to be any hygher at all,
then is to haue thinges foꝛ mans
neceſſitie: So that towarde them
we maye not beare any maner of
loue oꝛ affection, but only we muſt
with ſuche a mynde take theym to
helpe

helpe forth this lyke, as the craftes men take the instrumentes and toles to helpe theyr handye worke, that in the haupnge of ryches our mynde considre nothyng, but a plenty of thynges appertaynynge to our vse and necessytyes. And thus we maye bothe for our selfe and for our neyghbours be thynke vs well, howe we shalle lyue: but it maye be noo care nor yet any erneste studye, leste therby our charitie with god be dimynysshed. For holde faste my syster in your remembrance, that to haue and kepe charytie with god, is to loue God with your holle harte, with your hole mynde, with your holle power. If any smalle parte of your harte, or of youre mynde, or of your wyt, be bestowed in any affection or loue towarde this life:

To kepe Charytie with god.

ye mynyſhe the perfection of your charite with god, the which requireth of you all and hole, to be without a felowe by hym ſelfe alone loued.

You may ryght well ſyſter putte youre mynde and wytte to getie theſe thynges that meinteyne this lyfe, but it muſte be done without all loue and affection: there maye be no parte of loue ſpente in ſuche matters, for your mynde can not with any loue and affect labour to get and to holde this worldly commodites, but in the meane ſeaſon your charitie with god is greately decayed and welnyghe broken. Alſo you betray your ſelfe, to myſtruſte the promiſſion of god, with the whiche myſtruſte god is moſte diſpleaſed. For there be three cauſes noted, that ſhulde chiefly moue

mens

Thre mo-tions to de-sire world-ly goodes.

mens mindes to desyre these world-ly goodes: One is the loue of welthe, ease, myrthe, and pleasure: An other loue of worshyppe, ho-nour, and glorye: the thyrde the doubtefulnes and mystruste of ly-uynge here, the whiche mystrust I saye, is worste of all, and moche more to be blamed then the other two. For a felowe sette to his plea-sure, loueth money to serue hym to make merye, and to make ther-with good chere: the other set vp-pon honor loueth the present goo-des, bycause by them he wolde be regarded. Bothe these men spende as faste as they gette, and smalle store they putte in the vylenes of money: but he that vpon mystrust seketh goodes, loueth then to hyde them to kepe theym as well frome hym selfe as from other, beinge e-

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uer in fere, eyther of famyne, scarce nes, or of olde age, or of sycknes, or of tribulations: and moche bet= ter confidence and trust he putteth in his owne policy and prouysion, then he dothe in the goodnesse of god, that made all, and that nou= tysscheth vs all, not leauynge the smalleste gnatte, the leaste worme or flye without dyspensation to haue conuenient sustinaunce: and of manne he clerely is myndefulle, yet man can not trust hym. Wher= fore the loue of this worlde vppon a mystruste of lyuynge, is a thyng in the syght of god mooste detesta= ble. Thus I say we maye vse this worlde, but we maye not abuse hit, whan for the worlde we breake cha ritye with god. And if our harte be not hollye gyuen to loue god, we haue not god with perfyte charyt= tie:

tie: god hath not our holle harte, if the worlde haue any parte.

The wey to comme to perfyte Charytie.

This is the wey to come to perfyte Charytie, to kepe our harte, our soule, oure mynde, oure wytte all holle for god: the whiche keppyng of our hart and mynde hole, is the rest and quietnes of the soule frome the sayde temptations and passions. And this is the dryuyng away of the lettes and impedimentes to atteyne charite, wherof now here a lyttell more.

This perfecte loue of god, maketh, as we haue sayde, the mynde stronge to withstond the thursting and shulderynge of synne: and the same bryngeth forthe consequently the ioyfull rest & quietnes from the forsayde passions: whiche the corrupte loue of this lyfe bredethe. So that this calmenes of mynde

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is a certayne effecte and worke of charitie. And hope in god maketh vs fyrmely to awayte for the fulfyllynge of the promesse of god in vs, and to vs: whiche hope is gote by pacience, that is constante endurynge of aduersitie, the whiche paciente endurynge is purchased with abstinence, that is a stronge resistynge ageinst euel enticementes. And feare of god causeth courage to flie & to absteine from euil, the whiche feare of god growethe of an vndoubted beleke in our master Chrystes techyng. Thus from faith we come to feare, from feare to fleinge of synne, and in fleinge of synne, we take a patient mynde to suffre, wherby we take hope and truste in god, throughe the whiche Hope oure soule syttethe in a sure chayre of a certayne expectation of

Hope in god.

Feare of god.

that whiche is laide vp in store for vs in heuen: And therof finally cometh in vs this charitie, whiche causeth vs to loue god for his infinite goodnes in the same promesse makinge, whereof nowe we wayte for the fulfyllynge: the whiche is also the thing that informeth and ordereth all oure thoughtes, in suche a dewe rewle, that our life thereby rendreth in all his actes a swete sauour boothe to god and to man. But agayne lette vs ones repete the effect of this lesson: who so euer beleueth our master, he feareth his punyshment, and he that feareth to be punyshed of Christe, refrayneth hym selfe from sensual lustes, the whiche be the causes of punyshmente: he that kepeth of suche causes, abydeth wel and suffreth tribulation: he that pacient-

Wekene in Christe.

lye

ly ſuffreth tribulation, hath a bleſ-
ſed hope and truſt in god, the whi-
che drawethe and pluckethe the
mynde from worldely affections:
and the mynde ones freely diſchar-
ged of all loue to this worlde,
ſtreyght taketh the pure burninge
charitie towarde god, and that ma
keth quietnes reſte and peace in
our conſcience. Thus euery way
we muſte reſolue our ſelfe to reſte
finally in the poſſeſſion of charite,
or elles we neither can beleue nor
feare Chriſte, as we ought to doo,
nor refreyne euylle luſtes, as we
ought to do, nor ſuffre tribulatiõs
as we oughte to doo: nor hope in
god as we ought to doo, nor leaue
the loue of theſe worldely dregges
as we owghte to doo: but in the
ſame we ſhall be drowned boothe
nyght and day durynge the ſpace

of this lyfe, from whens we shall passe in to miserable condicion of body and of soule, to endure with out ende the indignation of god, whom after this lyfe we neuer see, oneles we can nowe for his sake dispyse this worlde: the whyche thinge passeth the power of mans feblenes to do, excepte he vse the pusaunt myghte of Charitie, the which bringeth so feruent a desire to loue god, that nothinge beside is regarded: and suche a swetnes keleth the charitable mynde in his desire, that he wil not forgo or diminishe any part therof, although he shulde suffre a thousand hurtes and iniuries.

Saynete Stephan,

Here the louing disciple of Christ, saincte Stephan, howe he inflamed with charitie prayeth aloude for his turmentours, and craueth of

of god remission of theyr synnes, alledgynge their ingnorauunce for theyr excuse.

The berynge of Christes crosse is made by this Charitie a swete yocke and an easye bourden.

For he that with god is locked in charitie, sayth in all trybulacions with the prophet Hieremy: *Non sum turbatus domine sequens te pastorem,* Oh lorde in folowinge the my ruler, I can not be dyscomforted. For as oure eyen see not nor perceyue not any sterres in the brode sky, when the sonne is vp, in lyke maner yf the mynde be sette with charitie in god, it neyther feleth hym selfe, nor vtterlye seeth any thynge elles in this worlde besydes god, in whom and for whom al his thoughtes be consumed. I saye in god and for god, charitie kepeth his hole cours Ier. 17.

without interruption of any lette in this worlde. And touchynge charitie in god the whiche is vtterly to forsake al loue of this worlde, that therby we maye clene be ryd from all passyons to loue and honour god alone, lette this that we haue hetherto spoken be inoughe.

What is to kepe charitie.

Nowe a lyttell harken, what is this saying, to haue and kepe charitie. Truely hit is to deryue and to take out from oure loue in god, an other loue towardes man for god. For he that hath perfect charite in god, loueth for goddes sake all men as him selfe, by cause in man he knowethe is the image of god, the whiche image of god, the charitable hart embraceth indifferently in the hole kynde of man, withoute makynge exceptyon of frende and no frende, of well wyllers

lers and ennemyes, of kynsfolke and strangers: but as the fygure of god is equalle in all, soo he equally fauoureth all. For though with obstynate synners and with men wedded to theyr passions he be displeased, yet his dysplealure becometh hym as a louer that sorroweth his frendes hurte. Wherfore if he be a synner amended or conuerted, he is fulle of gladnes, and neuer cessethe he layenge his waite and watche to do man good so that by his charitie toward man for goddes sake, he contynuallye myndeth man well: and therof he neuer slaketh. In bysytynge the sycke, in clothynge the naked, in fedynge the hungry, in refreshyng the poore, in comfortinge the miserable, in prayinge for synfulle, in al worckes of mercy, pitie, & deuo-

cion, he laboureth with pleasure, by reason of his fast loue towarde god. He freely and gladlye forgyueth all maner displeasures, of iniuries, of rebukes, of hurtes, and so depe he is in his loue, that nothing can cause hym to hate. For it is a true sayenge, that who soo euer felith in his harte any poynte of hatred, for any maner of cause, ageynst any maner a man, this person maye be assured, that he is not in charitie with god. For our maister Christ saith: He that loueth me
Io. 14. et. 15. kepethe my commaundement: my commandement is, that one of you loue an other. Wherfore he that loueth not his neyghbour (euerye manne is neyghbour vnto other, dwellynge in the smalle compasse of this erthe) kepeth not our maysters commaundemente: and he that

that kepeth not the commaundement, canne not loue our mayster Chriſte, whom he that loueth not: loueth not god. Wherfore he that loueth not his neyghbour, halteth in his charitie towardes God.

Thus we maye ſee, that charitie in god teacheth what is to be done of vs towarde man, and euer we be aſſured to worke wel, if we kepe in vs this holy charitie: the whiche onely can kepe and knowethe the waye howe to kepe goddes worde. It is our mayster Chriſte, Mat. 5. that byddethe vs loue oure ennemies, to do welle with theym that haten vs, to praye for theym that perſecute vs. Chriſte thus commandeth vs, to thentente he wolde clenſe and rydde vs from hatred, from doinge iniuries, from being myndeful of diſpleaſures, to haue

vs

vs pure from hate, rancour, angre, and grudginge: he cõmandeth vs to loue without exception as well our foo, as our frende. He wolde haue vs of our charitie in god, to loue man after the ensaumple of god, the whiche wold haue all men indifferently to be saued and come to the lyghte of trouthe, lyke as his sonne shynethe ouer the good and euylle, his rayne fallethe as well vpon the vniust, as vpon the iuste: so wolde Christe haue vs in-
Ibidem. differentely spȝede our affections to all men, after the free lyberalle distribution of charitie. For and if you be in this case, that some persones ye loue, some you hate, some you nother loue noȝ hate, somme you loue so so, in a meane facion, somme you loue very ernestly: by this inequalitie of louynge, lerne,

that

that you be fare from perfect cha-
ritie with god, the whiche perfecte
charitie indyfferentely louethe all
men for goddis sake, the good sorte
of men as his dere frendes, the e-
uyll sorte, as them of whom may
be made dere frendes. In charitie
is no knowledge of any difference
betwene ryche and poore, betwene
mayster & seruaunt, betwene bond
and free, betwene faithful and vn-
true, betwene male and female, be
twene kynne and no kynne: the
charitable spirite lokethe vppon
mans symple nature, the whiche
in all men is lyke and one thinge:
wherof he conceiueth in his mynd
one indifferent contẽplacion of al,
and at all seasons he is well myn-
ded, euer well dysposed to doo all
men good with whom is neyther
englysche, nor scottisshe, aquayn-
taunce

taunce nor straunger : but with hym one is all and in all, Chryste Jesus alone, whome and whose crosse he knoweth, and nothynge elles.

Thus by our Charitie with god we lerne, what is oure duetie towarde man. But here in louynge your neyghbours and bretherne, loke you deceiue not your selfe, for hit is not inoughe to loue youre neyghbour, but ye muste in the ordre and rule of charitie loue hym, that is onelye or chyefely, to loue hym for goddes sake. There be fyue wayes noted of louynge one of vs an other, of the whiche numbre one way is praysed, thre be vterly dyspraysed, and one neyther praysed nor dyspraysed. Firste I maye loue my neighbour for goddis sake, as euery good vertuous

man

man loueth euery man. Seconde I maye loue my neyghbour of a naturall affection, bycause he is my sonne, or brother, or kynsman. Thirdly I may loue for vainglorye, as if I loke by my neyghbour to be worshypped or aduaunced to honour. Fourthly I may loue for couetousnes, as whan I cherysche and flatter a ryche manne for his goodes, whan I make morthe of them that haue done me plesures, & maye do me mo. The fyfte way, I maye loue for my sensuall luste, as when I loue to fare delicatelye, or elles when I madde or dote vpon women.

The fyrst way to loue my neighbour, for the loue I beare to god, is onely worthye to be prayssedde. The seconde way naturally deserueth neyther prayse nor dysprayse. ffyue maner of loues.

The

The thyrde, the fourthe, and the fyfte to loue for glory, aduantage, or plesure al three be stark naught. Therfore syster, oute with youre loue, and considre welle, in what waye your harte is gyuen to loue your neyghbour. Charitie hath but one way of louing a man truly an well, that is onelye for goddes sake.

To conclude nowe this mattier, the whiche of him selfe is in sight, lette vs knytte vppe charitie with this generall knotte, that man is made absolute and perfecte in all vertues, through this one vertue of Charite. But whan I saye all vertues, loke that you vnderstõde what is ment in the name of vertue: or elles this generalle clause may deceyue you. Wherfore you muste lerne, that the body hath his

proper vertues, and the soule lyke wyse hath his owne aparte frome the other. The vertues of the bodye be, as to faste, to watche, to goo on pylgremage, to traueylle with hande and fote, for to helpe theyr neyghbours, to distribute youre goodes in almes dedes, to buylde vp churches, wherein the people may here the worde of god, and com to gether to prayer, to punyshe the flesshe with roughe heer, to slepe vpon the harde grounde, to socour the nedy, to ayde the miserable, and other suche actis bodilye menne doo for the loue and honour of god. The vertues of the soule be of a nother sort, as mekenes, pacience, abstinence, hope, faithe, charitie, pitye, mercy, and other lyke. Nowe if it so be, that of some infirmitie I can not faste, nor

Vertues of the bodye.

Vertues of the soule.

noꝛ watche, foꝛ lacke of money I can not do any almes, foꝛ lacke of bodyly strengthe, I canne not traueyle, if suche necessary and trewe consyderations make vs wante the vertues of the bodye, we be withoute blame, and had excused befoꝛe god, the whiche beholdethe the secrete and pꝛiuie cause of oure default. But in the vertues of out soule, we haue noo maner of defence, if it be so that we lacke any of them. Foꝛ they haue no necessitie, noꝛ constraynte of any thinge, but all be frely vnder the election and choyce of oure free wyll. And whan it is generally sayd, that charitie maketh a man absolute and perfecte in al vertues, ye must vnderstande in all the vertues of the soule, the whiche be very vertues, to speke and to name the truthe.

Wher-

wherby the bodye canne haue of hym selfe no vertue, nor nothynge can be done of the body worthye of prayse, onles the acte be coupled and toined with the vertues of the mynde. But contratye, the soule is perfecte in his vertues without al assistence and helpe of the body. Then boldelye we maye saye, that from charitie cometh all vertues, and none other werke there is of charytie, than to make and bringe forth in vs vertu. It is holy scriptures testimony, that charitie can not be vole. Alwaye than a charitable spyryte is doinge, & what so euer he doethe, hit muste nedes be a good worke. For what can come from the loue of god, but it shall sauer and smelle of god: the whithe sauour is this onelye thynge, that geuethe to mans acte all the

goodnes.

Nowe then my entierly beloued syster, to obserue and kepe this mooste precious and mooste holye charitie with god, you shal in few wordes haue a shorte reule. The beste waye to kepe you frome fallynge out of charitie with god, is neuer to suffre your christen neighbour to slepe in a displeasure with you, and agayne that you neuer slepe in a dysspleasure with your christen neyghbour. Remembre, we all be knytte in a faste kynrede vnder one father in heuen, the whiche commaundethe vs to loue together as brotherne and systerne, without regarde of hyghe or lowe, pore or riche, whether your neighbour be in defaulte, or you, this is to saye: whether he be dysspleased with you, or you with hym, make

therof

thereof noo queſtion, care not for the begynnyng of wrathe, but ſtudye euer for the ayed, and incontinently folowe alwaye the counſell of our mooſte charitable mayſter Chryſte: labour alway to make agremente, that at all ſeaſones you maye be redy to offre vppe to god your ſwete ſmellinge ſacrifice, the which is in goddis ſence the delectable ſauer of a charitable brethe: whoſe ſtrength is ſo mighty in his pleſaunte ſente, that hit hath his place amonge the incomparable ſauours of heuen, where god with al his ſayntes and aungels ſmelleth it.

Do you beare awaye ſyſter the ſhorte leſſon, that I haue gyuen to you? SVSTER. Whiche ſhorte leſſon meane you brother. for partly in writynge, partelye in

communication I haue had manye lessons of you: of the whiche some I beare well awaye, as yet it is out of my mynde, howe you haue proued to me, that a foole shoulde not lyue solitarye, that I muste forgette dysplealures, yf I forgyue theym, that I shoulde euer enclyne and obey more to reason, then to any intreatie. BROTHER. It is welle good syster that youe haue of thele thinges remembrance, but I thought not to aske you this: I wolde you rehersed to me, what you haue by me lerned of Charitie. SVS. Why brother, call ye that the shorte lesson when it conteyneth so manye lynes, that it wery ed me thre days to rede them ouer? BRO. I thinke well, that you were weryed, more peraduenture with my vnlauerye tel-

tellynge, than with the lengthe of the tale. For surelye the tale was but shorte. SIS. If that be a shorte tale, I cõfesse to you brother, that I can not telle what is shorte and what is longe. For to me your lesson of charitie semed verye longe. BRO. It is not syster the noumbre of wordes or of lynes, that maketh a tale or a booke to be called longe or shorte. But the matter that is intreated maketh bothe: so that of some matter you maye in verye fewe wordes here a verye longe tale, and ageyn of some mater a greate heape of wordes maketh but a shorte tale. Lyke as we saye of tyme, that it is but a lyttel whyle ago, sins Fraunce was vnder our rule, and that paper, printynge of bokes, & gunnes, be thynges inuented within fewe yeres,

and that the .iiii. orders of fryers beganne in chrystendome within a lyttell tyme paste: yet in eche of these forsaide sayinges, we vnderstande more then a hundred yeres. Contrarye wyse ye wyll say, that my lady princes hath lyen a great whyle atte Eltham, and yet her grace hath not lien there one yere. So you wyl say, that it is a longe season syns you and I were to gither: & yet I was with you within this moneth. When you knocke at a doore, and tarye oone houre, you say you haue verye longe taryed there. Thus you may see, it is the dignitie & the worthynes of the thinge, that causeth the tyme to be named longe or shorte, and not the tyme of his owne space.
In this maner it is in your lesson of charitie, the whiche is a matter

ter so plentiful, so copious, so long, so large, so depe, so hyghe, that no tale therof can be called longe, onles the teller tryfle in vayne wordes, and then you maye saye this tale is longe, bicause he telleth and sheweth his folysshenes: but spekyng dyrectly of charitie, he neuer can saye to moche. For whan we haue sayde all that we can, yet shal the matter of charitie lye in hepes infynite to be spoken more of. For syster, what tongue or penne of man can make an ende in tellynge the smallest portion of goddis substaunce? this charitie is god, and God is this Charytie. Therfore thynke not youre lesson longe of charitie. For all that I haue sayd, is in effecte nothynge. SIS. You haue somewhat made me knowe, what is a longe tale and what is a 1. Io. 4.

shorte: but yet brother, bycause the common prouerbe is trewe, that womennes wittes in dede be shorte, I praye you, if it be possible, lette my lesson be rehersed in fewe wordes. BRO. It is a thing sylter, sone done, to comprehend in a few lynes al that you haue hard of me. For the sume of the hole is: This charitie contaynethe all the lawes of god, and teacheth vs our duetie boothe towarde God and man: the which charitie requireth a quyete spirite, and no spyrite is quyete, that is subiecte to any passion. Wherefore to haue charitie we must chase from vs al passions to rest so in our loue of god, that nothing withdrawe vs nor plucke vs inordinately to any thoughte be syde god: wherof shulde folowe that in this worlde, we wolde reke

laugh-

laughynge to be weppynge, sorowe to be myrthe, ryches to be pouertie, miserie, to be welth, wysedome to be foly, honour to be shame, so depely we shulde be buried in god that to this lyfe our senses shulde lye deed, and quicke onelye in the loue of god: from the whiche true and entier loue of god, we shoulde take a loue with all hartes affecte to the hole kynde of man, in whom beholde spirytually the ymage of god: For the whiche image sake we shulde beare no lesse fauour to man than were sufficient to resiste and vtterly vanquysche all hate, without the remembraunce of any grudge to be taken with any maner of occasion, to be euer with all men ioyned in harte throughe our loue in god, as fast as kynred ioyneth a fewe persons throughe a na

turall loue: yea faster knyttethe mens hartes to gethers charytie, than nature can do.

This is the some of our lesson sister. The whiche you shall haue agayne made shorte, if you wyll. SIS. Nay brother, I pray you let this be no shorter. For in my mind it is all redy somewhat to shorte. For I wolde desyre you to lette me in order to aske you a repetition of myne olde lesson, that I maye in a shorte forme lerne, what was fyrste, what was seconde, and soo forthe to the conclusion of youre tale. BRO. I do not yet well perceyue, what you wolde haue me do. but aske me what you wyl, and I shal therto make answere. SIS. Then brother telle me, what was the fyrste poynt, that you tolde me of Charitie. BRO. Fyrste I shewed

wed to you the signification of the worde, that charitie was not onely take for peace, patience, mercy, and pitye, as in our englyshe tong commenly we vse it for nothynge ells as whan I saye I wyll not breake charitie, I wyll kepe charitie, I wyll forgyue hym for charitie, trouth it is that charite signifieth all these, and as I shewed to you, moche more: for the worde in the same, that is in latin called Charitas, the whiche signifiethe an ordynate loue, and a due rule towarde god and man, the whiche ordinat loue the soule hath, when he holly with all his power is wedded to god: so that beside he neyther wyllethe nor desyrethe anye thing. By the whiche feruent loue in god, he exerciseth amonge men all the kinde of vertue. And thus

The repetition of this treatyse.

was

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The repetition of this treatyse.

was

was the fyrst thyng syster, to haue you to knowe, what the worde of charytie sygnifyeth. SISTER. Me thought brother, that fyrste of all you shewed, that charytie conteyneth all goddes lawes. BRO. I dyd in dede, to bryngе you to the syghte of the greatte compasse, that was in the name of Charitie: wherby you might the better lerne that in englysshe tongue we conceyue but a lyttell portion of this infynite vertue, whanne we commenly speake therof. But howe so euer I begonne, the fyrste poynte of youre lesson was to lerne the strengthe of charities name. SIS. I wold nowe aske you the second, if it cam not in my mynde to dout, whether charytie and loue be not all one, as in communycation I haue harde some clerkes saye they

be.

be. BRO. I thynke wel some clerkes wyll so say. For I note in the last englyche trãslation of the gospels out of laten, the translatour alwaye for Charitas wryteth Loue: wherin I canne not consente with hym. For after myn opinion there is as moche differẽce betwene loue and charitie, as it is in your occupation betwene threde and twined threde. For you wyll saye, that all twined threde is thred, but al thred is not twyned threde: Soo this worde Loue is more commen and more generall then is charitie. For trouthe it is, that all Charitie is loue: but it is not trouthe, that al loue is charitie. In greke charitie is agape, and loue, is eros, as in latine loue is amor, & charitie is Charitas. In all these thre tonges there is the same dyfference in the tone worde

worde frome the tother, that is a penne and a quylle. All our pennes for the moste parte be quylles: but all our quylles be not pennes: The quylle is that remaineth in his nature, without any other facion or forme put to it: the penne is a quil shaped, and formed, and made apte to write. Like wise loue is the common affecte of fauoure: charitie is loue reduced in to a due order towardes god and man, as to loue god alone for him selfe, & to loue man for goddes sake. Do you perceyue sister what I saye? SVS. Me thinketh brother, that you meane as I wolde saye, that betwene charite and loue is a like difference, as is betwene my pirles and wyres. For I see that my pirles be wyers, but they haue a facion by my labour putte to, the

whiche

whiche facion wyers haue not.
And here may I saye as you sayde of Charitie and Loue, that al pierles be wyers, but all wyers, be not pierles. But brother, if all charitie be loue, what defaulte put you in the translatour, the whiche writeth loue for Charitas. BROTHER. The same defaulte I put in hym, that you wold put in one, the whiche doth giue to you wiers for pirles, or quyls for pennes. But sister remembre, you wolde haue me be shorte. SIS. It is trouthe brother: but the beste shortenesse is to be playne. For whan I vnderstande my lesson, I canne soone make hit shorte. Nowe thenne if you wyll, I praye you telle me the seconde poynte.

BRO. The seconde was to shew you, that charitie could not be had

with

without the assured myndes quy-
etnes, as an effecte folowynge the
same, the whiche stedfast quyetnes
of mynde is not to be inordinatlye
styrred or moued with passions.
SIS. Sauynge your tale brother:
I praye you tell me some englyshe
worde what you calle passion.
For truly I knowe no nother pas-
sion but the passion of Christe.
BRO. Than I haue loste many
wordes. For I thoughte I hadde
sufficiētly declared vnto you, that
any mouynge of the mynde in to
an vngodlye desyre, was called a
passion, as malyce, rancour, yre,
enuy, ambition, couetousenes. let-
chery, glottony, pryde, hatred, stu-
dy of prayse, study of auengynge,
and suche other, whiche styrre vp
and moue the mynde oute of his
naturalle reste, to loue or to hate
with

without reason and measure: As whan our bodye suffreth any tourment, we say, we be in a passion: so when our mynde suffreth any suche inordinat desires, we haue the myndes passion: and euerye suche motion of mynde out of due cours is called a passion. The mynde is moued out of his due cours, as often as hit is stirred with these affectes, that be engendred of our principall loue to this lyfe, as to be displayed with oure displayses or sclaunders is a thynge that ryseth in vs frome the loue of this lyfe, where if we study to be magnified, we be in a sooze passion agaynste reason, the whiche teacheth vs to seke our glozy in mozestable thynges, then can be founde in this life. But bicause you speke of the wozde, shortely as you saye,

it is no very englysshe worde: how be it whan we be dryuen to speake of thynges that lacke the names in our tongue, we be also dryuen to borowe the wordes, that we haue not, sometyme out of latyne, sometyme out of greke, euen as the laten tonge doth in lyke necessite borowe & take of other. And though nowe at the fyrst hering this word standethe straungelye with you, yet by vse it shall ware familyar, spectally when you haue it in this maner expressed vnto you.

Nowe then to obteyne this reste of mynde, the chefe effecte of charite, we must beware that no passion rule in vs, but alwayes in all thynges we muste ordre out delytes by the draughte and trayne of this one desire, the which we haue for louynge god alone with al out

holle

holle hartes, power, wittes, & in-
tellygẽce, neuer ſuffring aduiſed-
lye the cozupte loue of this falſe
flatering lyfe, to haue any ſmall
place in oure ſoule, whereby we
ſhulde waxe the weker in the fulle
vnyenge and knittinge of all our
intencions to the wille and plea-
ſure of god. And ſyſter, it was the
ſeconde parte of your leſſon. SVS.
Ye bzother I wolde I had lerned
well, that I myght euer be quiete,
howe ſoo euer I were handeled,
cyghtwiſely oz vnrightwiſely, wel
oz euyl, gentilly oz chozlyſhely.
It were an angels condition to be
nothynge changed oz moued with
wel oz woo: but to be continually
in one tenure, in on temperature,
neyther hering, noz ſeinge, noz fe-
lynge, noz ſmellynge, noz taſtyng,
noz wylſhynge, noz myndyng any

erthly thing beſydes god, but hauynge continually a feruent deſire to knowe, to loue, and to honour god. But bzother, what meane you by this; to ſpeake thus, as though it were poſſible, to make of men angelles, and moze ouer to make of this wozlde heuen: as long as man is man, and as long as this wozlde is this wozlde, I reken hit not poſſible to kepe vs thus clene from paſſions, as you ſay the perfecte reſte of charytie requyreth. BRO. You entre with me nowe ſiſter, in to a matter of a longe communycation, but at this tyme I wyl make you therto a verye ſhozt aunſwer.

Chryſte wolde neuer teache man to pzaye, and to aſke of god thynges impoſſible to be opteyned. He inſtructed vs to ſay in out pza

yer

yet, *Adueniat regnum tuum.* Oh lorde god let thy kyngedome be here amongest vs. Where the kyngedome of god is, there god reygnethe ouer suche subiectes, as be worthy to haue suche a kinge: and playnly there is heuen, where so euer is the kingdome of god: So that of this world, there might be made an heuen. Mat. 6.

Ageyn our maister and sauiour taught vs to praye, *Fiat uoluntas tua sicut in cælo et in terra,* Oh good lorde graunte, that thy wylle maye be fulfylled in this worlde, as it is in heuen: that we men may in euery thoughte and acte agre with thy will, as angels doo: that we in this lyfe make noo more resystence agaynste thy pleasure, then the blessed cõpany of heuen dothe. Thys petition can not take effecte

onles man be made lyke an angel, all pure & clene from the dreggy appetites of this lyfe: that is to say, vtterly ridde from all passyons, the which euer stryue ageinst the wyll of god.

Now then in as moche as I beleue, that Christ byddethe vs aske nothynge, but the same maye be: I think it possible to make of this worlde the kyngdome of god, and to make men the kepers of goddis wyll: The whithe two thinges, to lyue in the kingdome of god, and to obserue and kepe goddes will, I recken to be a perfection of angels lyfe in heuen

But syster, remembre, Christe biddethe vs not to attempte to performe this perfection by our owne power: for that were playnly impossible, but it is our masters in-

ſtruction, that we ſhulde turne vs in prayer to god, and of his infynyte goodnes craue and aſke his grace, wherby we ſhall be comforted, ſuſteyned, and corraged to ſaye at the laſte with ſayncte Paule.

We be able to doo all in hym, that helpeth vs Jeſus Chriſte. This were to haue our ſpirite holly gyuen to ſerue god, to knowe god, to loue god, and nothynge elles. Eph. 4.

And if you wolde ſay, that ſayncte Paule came not to this perfection, nor none of the ſayncte, but the beſte men were ſynners, lette it ſo be: yet be aſſured if man duely applye his wyl, to be withoute ſynne, ſo that in his wyll be noo lacke nor faynynge, this man before god is an aungell. And ſyſter, as he ſhoteth nerer the marke, then he dothe that ſeeth none, and ſhoteth at all

aduentures: soo you seinge nowe and knowynge the very perfectyon of charitie, you shall the better enforce towarde it, thanne if you were beset with blynde ignorance. of al this matter sister, with you I wyl not reson out of your Pater noster, ỹ which I think is inough for your requestes at this tyme. SIS. I holde me contented brother, and praye I wyll fyxte, that I maye thynke possible to be thus perfect. Herte that I maye haue grace to enforce thitherward the vertuous power of my harte. BRO. There is nos more required of you, but this applyenge of your wyll to get grace, but grace shall you neuer gette, but if you aske it withoute any dout or mystrust in the goodnes of god, whoo is euer redye to gyue, when he hereth one that acfor=

cordyngly asketh.

And to shewe you what prayer is shaped accordyngly to goddis eares, it were a matter for no lyttell boke. Therfore syster, be contented to leaue your digressions, and retorne to your purpose. SIS. I haue no purpose, but to lerne, and lerne I shulde if you taughte me to praye. Yet lest I trouble you to to moche, I wylle go forthe, to require of you what was the thyrde poynte in my lesson of charytie.

BRO. It was to shewe, that charitie is not lyke one vertue, but it is suche a thynge, that by manye degres of diuers verues, it muste be goten, as a fynalle conclusyon of all labour and trauayle in vertue. As firste we muste be endued with an vndoubted Feythe, to beleue perfectlye the hystorye of our saui-

Charitie is not like one vertue

saupour: whose doctryne brought firste into this worlde this charitie for an absolute cõclusion of all lawes. After this faithe we must entre into a fere of god, not the feare of vile bõdmen, the which haue no mind to kepe theyr maisters pleasure, but only loke vpõ the punischmente, our feare muste be a reuerence to god, lyke as louyng chyldrẽ feare to displease theyr fathers. By this reuerent and louing feare we muste procede to Abstynence, that is to say, we must beare suche feare and reuerẽce to god, as shall cause vs for the honour of god, to refreyne the sensual inticementes of synne, the whiche despotteth, deformeth, and defeateth the ymage of god in vs, the greatteste euyll that man hath. To kepe this abstinence we must gather Pacyence,

Feare of god.

Abstinence

Pacience.

ence,

ence, a vertue that maketh strong our soule, to suffre the violence of all relistence to vertue, by the whiche pacience we shall take an hope to be parte takers of goddes mercyfulnes, and to inioy a rewarde, that passeth al the powers of men, to shewe it. Out of this spryngeth a feruente loue to god, whiche is called charitie, through whiche the mynd shal be setteled in such a quietnesse, that all the chaungeable and sondry blastes of this worde, shall nothynge moue vs from our desyre to rest in god: And this mindes reste and perfecte qnietnes is the pryncypall effecte of charitie, the conclusion and finall perfection of all vertue.

I wyll nowe ende these matters, with a wonderful prayse, that the chosen vessell of god saynte Paule wri-

wryte the of charitie, of the whiche prayse I wolde haue you syster note and marke diligentely, what a dignite is in charite, to be aboue al thinges pondred and regarded
1. Cor. 13. of al Christen men: This apostle sayth in effect thus. If almyghty god the father wolde gyue to me all giftes of his grace, as to endue me with the holy spirite of prophecy, to make me a priuie counseilor of al the secret misteries in heuen, to cause by the power & strengthe of fayth to worke wonders, to do myracles in quicknyng the deed, in gyuinge sight to the blynde, yet all this not withstandynge, I am not in the way of saluacion, if I wante charitie. Howe moche then shulde manne bestowe, endeuour, enforce, and exercise all his wittes to gette and kepe the possessyon of

of this high vertue, the whiche is the soule of lyfe, the grace of graces, the one thing that ioyneth mã in fauor with god, & that god only requireth of man for all his goodnes towarde man: It is suche a thinge this charitie, that by thautoxite of holy wzit, I wil not onely cal this vertu a godly thing, but I say it is god him selfe, that who so euer kepethe him in charitie, he hath god with hym: and he in god dwelleth, that dwelleth in charitie. For both god is charyte & charite is god: to whom nowe & euermoze be all glozye, prayse, and honour. Amen. 1. Io. 4.

FINIS.

THus endeth this treatyse of Charitie.

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Cum priuilegio Ad imprimendum solum.

ANNO. M. D. XXXIX.